



AFRICAN UNION AND HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS CASE STUDY OF SOMALIA AND SUDAN

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ABSTRACT: *The world's biggest concentration of wars is found on the African continent, and there is a positive association between the rise in intra- and interstate conflicts and humanitarian crisis in the continent. Currently, the conflict in Sudan has killed about 12000 people and displaced 6.1 million, while the ongoing conflict in Somalia area has resulted in severe human rights violations and mass displacement. To effectively address these humanitarian crises, AU established department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs & Social Development (HHS). This study critically examines AU's humanitarian interventions in Somalia and Sudan. By focusing on the complexities of these crises and the limitations inherent in the AU's approach, the study highlights the key factors that have hindered the organization's ability to deliver effective and sustainable humanitarian responses.*

KEYWORDS: African Union, Sudan, Somalia, Humanitarian Crisis.



INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, Africa has witnessed significant humanitarian crises caused by inter and intra-state conflict, war, political instability, climate change, and socioeconomic issues, all of which have severe consequences for people's lives and livelihoods. These crises have resulted in increased displacement, food shortages, and human suffering, affecting millions across the continent. Conflicts and ongoing violence in the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Central and Southern Africa have exacerbated displacement and humanitarian needs in the region (Ajala 2023, 126). Currently, the conflict in Sudan has killed about 12000 people and displaced 6.1 million, while the ongoing conflict in the Somalia area has resulted in severe human rights violations and mass displacement (OCHA 2023, 5). Relatedly, climate change, including droughts, floods, and cyclones, also contributes to humanitarian crises in Somalia and other African countries (FAO, 2022). Consequently, there have been casualties and displacement. More than one-third of the world's refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) are in Africa, where millions have fled their homes due to environmental disasters and conflicts (UNHCR, 2023)

To effectively engage in security and humanitarian issues in the region led to the transformation of Organization of African Union (OAU) to African Union (AU). AU is an international organization consisting of 55 members' states, established in May 2001 to build a comprehensive structure for regional integration, interstate solidarity, promotion of peace, security, as well as addressing humanitarian crisis across the region (Tieku 2004, 250). Article 4(h) of the AU's Constitutive Act emphasizes the organization's responsibility to intervene in situations involving war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

Despite its mandate, the AU has experienced major limitations in carrying out effective humanitarian response. Notably, in the cases of Somalia and Sudan, AU missions identified both structural and operational limitations. The AU-led African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) aimed to confront Al-Shabaab's insurgency and support the federal government in Somalia, but it struggled to establish long-term stability. Similarly, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) aimed to solve the humanitarian crisis induced by the Darfur conflict. AMIS and the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) have undoubtedly accomplished success in monitoring ceasefire violations, providing critical oversight in Darfur, and assisting Sudan's democratic transition. However, the mission falls short of fulfilling its goal of preventing human rights violations and promoting long-term peace (Human Rights Watch, 2022). These missions were designed to stabilize conflict zones, facilitate humanitarian aid, and protect vulnerable populations. However, their effectiveness has been limited, raising critical questions about the AU's capacity to respond to the humanitarian mandate. While there is extensive literature on the AU's peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts, (Adeyeye & Alidoga 2012, Tieku 2007, William 2016, Welz 2013). This study critically examines AU's humanitarian interventions in Somalia and Sudan. By focusing on the complexities of these crises and the limitations inherent in the AU's approach, the study highlights the key factors that have hindered the organization's ability to deliver effective and sustainable humanitarian responses.



Against this backdrop, this study examines the research question; to what extent has AU been effective in their humanitarian intervention? Effectiveness in this context is defined as the extent by which AU achieve its mandates, ensure civilian protection, facilitate humanitarian aid, and establish conditions for sustainable peace. I argued that the ineffectiveness of the AU in mission in Somalia and Sudan is linked to a combination of internal and external factors. Internally, limited financial resources, inadequate logistics, and the absence of unified command have critically undermined its ability to respond effectively and cohesively. Externally, the complexity of the conflicts in Somalia and Sudan characterized by deeply entrenched political and ethnic divisions, weak governance structures, and competing interests of the member states has further compounded these challenges, making effective intervention exceptionally challenging. While the analysis centers on Somalia and Sudan, these findings are representative of broader patterns observed across all AU humanitarian responses in various contexts. The objective of this study is to establish the gap between the humanitarian mandate of the AU and the practical realities of its interventions, thereby highlighting the essential reforms needed to enhance humanitarian responses across Africa.

This study aims to make a theoretical contribution to the broader discourse on the AU's function and operations, particularly in the context of humanitarian interventions. It seeks to elucidate the underlying factors contributing to the AU's ineffectiveness in addressing humanitarian crises while offering actionable recommendations for institutional reform to inform policymakers and engage the public.

This article is organized into four sections. First, is the introduction of the essay. In the second section, I review the relevant literature on the concept of international organization and humanitarian interventions as well as the theoretical framework. The third section examines the AU humanitarian response in Somalia and Sudan and its challenges. In the fourth section, I concluded by restating the main argument, highlighting the findings and recommendations of the study as well as suggesting the area for further studies.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This section surveys the relevant literature, aiming to provide a theoretical foundation for analyzing the effectiveness of AU in responding to humanitarian crises.

International organization is defined as a formal organization with a permanent secretariat and three or more members states (Pevehouse and Borzyskowski 2018, 2). Relatedly, Barnett & Finnemore 2004 argued that international organizations are bureaucracies established by states to pursue particular objectives through collective action and rulemaking. An international organization is a legal entity established by a treaty or formal document, governed by international law, has its own legal identity separate from that of its member states (Peters 2017, 41).

According to Peter (2017) these organizations serve as mechanisms for fostering cooperation among states to address shared issues that transcend national boundaries as well as operate within a legal framework that not only enables their functions but also impose constraints to ensure accountability and adherence to the rule of law. Klein and Sands (2008) note that the roles and powers of international organizations are dynamic, continually expanding and



evolving in response to the rapid globalization characterized by increased state interconnectedness and the emergence of complex global challenges, which includes climate change, financial instability, and international security threats, that necessitate innovative and adaptive institutional responses. This dynamic context creates avenues for institutional transformation, allowing international organizations to broaden their mandates, refine their governance structures, and enhance their capacity to address a widening array of global activities and issues effectively.

Humanitarian intervention is defined as the threatened or actual use of armed force without the consent of the target state to resolve a humanitarian disaster that was caused by severe and widespread violations of fundamental human rights (Cha 2002,134). Humanitarian intervention often occurs in response to extreme circumstances, such as genocide, war, ethnic cleansing, or severe violations of human rights. The international organization is obligated to protect the populations from atrocities when their own government fails to do so in accordance with the United. The United Nations (UN), as the primary global actor in peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention, often collaborates with regional organizations to address crises. While regional organizations are generally better positioned to respond quickly to local emergencies, they frequently lack the resources and institutional capacity required for sustained, long-term interventions (Bellamy & Williams 2005, 7). As regional organization, AU is mandated by its Constitutive Act to intervene in member states during dire circumstances and to promote peace, security, and stability across the continent. The AU's establishment marked a significant shift from the era of the OAU, which prioritized sovereignty and non-interference, to a more proactive stance on conflict prevention, management, and resolution (Tieku 2004, 205). Similarly, Williams (2009) argued that the establishment of the Peace and Security Council demonstrates the AU's acknowledgment of the need for a feasible institutional framework capable of handling the continent's complex security issues. The transition from OAU to AU stemmed from the conviction that the UN Security Council and the wider international community inadequately addressed African concerns, reflecting an increasing advocacy for African solutions to Africa problem (Murithi 2003, 810). Makinda and Okumu (2008) contended that the conclusion of the Cold War, acknowledgment of globalization's influence, neo-liberal economic ideology, advocacy for human rights, demands for transparency from civil society organizations, the increasing appeal of liberal democratic principles, and personal rivalries among certain African political leaders established the groundwork for the formation of the African Union (Makinda and Okumu 2008,2) The AU Humanitarian Policy framework encompasses the 1969 OAU Convention on Refugees, the 2009 Kampala Convention of the African Union for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the African Union Policy Guideline on the role of the African Standby Force in Humanitarian Action and Natural Disaster Support (HANDS), the African Humanitarian Agency (AfHA), and among others (Teka 2022, 4).

The AU Commission has established specialist sections, such the Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees, and Displaced Persons Division (HARDP), to coordinate disaster response and management operations. The AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), established in 2006, is a framework that emphasizes post-conflict stability, humanitarian assistance, and the prevention of conflict resurgence. The inadequacy of the existing frameworks led to establishment of African Humanitarian Agency (AHPF) in 2016 to serves as the main framework for the AU's humanitarian action (Negem 2022,1921). Welz



(2013) noted that the African Union has persisted as an intergovernmental organization rather than a supranational entity since its inception due to inadequate commitment and the reluctance of member states to relinquish national sovereignty (Welz 2013, 5). Similarly, Murithi (2005) asserted that the AU's humanitarian responses are impeded not only by the inadequate political will of member states to tackle crises that diverge from their national interests but also by a substantial reliance on these states for military and financial resources, which significantly constrains the AU's ability to operate autonomously (Murithi 2005, 47). A body of literature currently exists regarding the mandate, mechanisms, achievements of African Union. However, this study aims to investigate the extent of AU effectiveness in humanitarian intervention in Somalia and Sudan.

Theoretical Framework Realism

Realist scholars highlight that the international system is inherently anarchic, indicating the absence of a supreme authority to govern state actions. The absence of authority, along with the existence of offensive military capabilities and a persistent lack of trust between states, influences the behavior of nations. Waltz (1979) argues that structural factors such as anarchy, offensive capabilities, and mistrust foster an environment where states are compelled to prioritize their survival above all else. Mearsheimer (2001) expands on this argument, arguing that powerful states often engage in aggressive actions to secure their survival. In this perspective, states are driven to seek power, often employing offensive strategies, to deter threats and protect their sovereignty. This behavior stems not from the intrinsic aggressiveness of states, but from the very logic of the anarchic system, which restricts weakness and favors strength. Waltz (1986) asserted that the pursuit of national interests often requires a willingness to employ force. States, operating within a self-help system, must consistently prepare for conflict to safeguard their interests and deter potential adversaries. The realist focus on power and security elucidates the reluctance of states to trust one another or delegate authority to international organizations, perceiving these actions as potential threats to their autonomy and strategic interests. Realists critique international institutions, asserting that these entities often represent the interests of dominant states instead of acting as impartial arbiters. Additionally, realists contended that institutions are only instruments

employed by dominant states to further their interests and do not fundamentally transform the competitive essence of international relations (Mearsheimer 1994, 13). This implies that states are hesitant about allocating resources or participating in interventions that do not directly benefit their national interests or security, as they are driven by concerns for security and survival.

This framework helps explain the limited effectiveness of international and regional organizations, such as the AU, in responding to crises, as their actions are often constrained by the competing interests and security concerns of member states. This dynamic is evident in the cases of Somalia and Sudan, where the behavior of African member states has frequently revealed competing national interests that undermine cohesive and effective responses. However, considering that the ineffectiveness of the AU extends beyond the behavior of its member states, realism lacks sufficient explanatory power to comprehensively analyze this study.



Constructivism

International organizations are designed as embodiments of collective understandings among states, reflecting established norms and principles of what constitutes appropriateness and legitimate behavior within the international system (Pevehouse and Borzyskowski 2018, 5). These shared norms significantly influence the establishment, operational structures, and developmental paths of international organizations. Constructivist theories highlight the role of international organizations in socializing states, cultivating a shared identity and a sense of mutual responsibility. This process motivates states to behave in accordance with international norms, even if such actions do not immediately benefit their material interests. The AU's adoption of the principle of non-indifference in intervention in the instances of genocide or crimes against humanity, illustrate the logic of appropriateness. This shift also indicates a normative change towards promoting human rights and improving international accountability, aligning the AU's policies with advancing global standards of justice and humanitarian responsibility. According to Checkel (2005) Socialization is defined by as the process of inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community (Checkel 2005, 804). This framework offers an understanding of how AU member states engage with the principles enshrined in its Constitutive Act. It also helps explain both compliance with these norms and instances where member states deviate from them. Socialization within the AU can be analyzed through the two types identified by Checkel: Type I and Type II socialization. In Type I socialization, member states adhere to norms and rules derived from instrumental calculations. This method is characterized by a rationalist perspective where adherence to rules is driven by the pursuit of material gains, strategic objectives, or avoiding sanctions. From this lens, AU member states endorse interventions or peacekeeping missions not out of a genuine commitment to collective security or human rights, but rather because they align with their national interest. In Type II socialization, there is a deeper internalization of norms, wherein states adopt these norms as integral to their identity and regard them as the right thing to do (Checkel 2005, 806). In this form of socialization, compliance is driven by genuine normative commitment rather than instrumental calculations. However, the conditions that facilitate Type II socialization, including sustained interaction, the establishment of trust, internalization and reinforcement of norms, are often absent within the AU framework. Fragmented political will, competing national interests, and weak enforcement mechanisms hinder the deeper internalization of norms among member states.

Consequently, AU often struggles to achieve cohesive and effective intervention as observed in the case of Somalia and Sudan. While Constructivism provides a robust framework for analyzing norm-driven behavior within the AU, it is limited in explaining the AU's ineffectiveness in Somalia and Sudan because it focuses on norms, identity, and shared values and ignores structural constraints.

Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal institutionalism is a theoretical framework within the discipline of international relations that highlights the significance of international institutions in promoting cooperation among states (Keohane 1995, 46). Similar to realism, liberal institutionalism asserts that the international system is characterized by anarchy, signifying the lack of a dominant authority to impose rules among sovereign states (Keohane, 1984, p. 85). However, it does not view anarchy as a barrier to collaboration; instead, institutions are regarded as instruments to



promote order and alleviate the uncertainties that are intrinsic to an anarchic system. Axelrod and Keohane (1985) emphasized the theoretical framework of mutual interests, the shadow of the future, and the number of players as essential mechanisms for state cooperation. Additionally, cooperation is established on a spectrum of payoff structures, wherein diverse situations exhibit differing levels of risk or conflict of interest, influencing the willingness of actors to cooperate (Axelrod and Keohane 1985, 229).

Furthermore, liberal institutionalism argues that institutions may mitigate issues related to asymmetrical information, moral hazard, high transaction costs and facilitate intergovernmental agreements. Institutions enhance the efficiency and reliability of cooperation by promoting information exchange and establishing an appropriate environment for negotiation (Keohane, 1984, 90- 96). These assumptions are essential since they assert that institutions serve not only as platforms for cooperation but also as mechanisms that facilitate cooperation in intricate, multi- state contexts. This theory posits that international organizations may transcend the constraints of individual state interests, promoting interconnectedness that diminishes the incentive for unilateral actions and the escalation of conflict. Liberal institutionalism offers a compelling framework for analyzing the establishment and operation of AU as an international organization aimed at promoting cooperation, integration, and improvement of peace and security among African state. From this perspective AU is viewed as a tool for mitigating the uncertainties inherent in an anarchic international system, highlighting the importance of shared interests and institutional design in fostering collaboration. AU was established to tackle collective challenges, relying on mutual interests and institutional frameworks to promote collaboration among member states for regional security and stability. However, while liberal institutionalism offers valuable insights into the theoretical rationale behind the AU's establishment and its objectives, it lacks the explanatory power to fully explain the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of AU in practice.

Thus, this study employs a functionalist theoretical framework to effectively analyze the AU's ineffectiveness and address its constraints.

Functionalists argue that international organizations were created to fulfill specific functions within international policies, such as the reduction of nationalism and attachment to territory, which have been the foundation of political conflict in the international system. Functionalism asserts that international organizations are established to perform specific tasks which include economic, social, technical, and security related issues. According to Peters (2016), these organizations are designed to address issues that individual states cannot resolve on their own, thereby categorizing them as public collectives committed to promoting global public interests (Peter, 2016, 35). Functional cooperation is framed as essential and appropriate emphasizing technical problem-solving rather than political factors, thereby protecting organizations from critiques related to sovereignty. Functionalism portrays the activities of international organizations as neutral and purpose-driven, thereby increasing their acceptability among states and mitigating concerns regarding the erosion of sovereignty.

Peters (2016) posited that the effectiveness of international organizations depends on their capacity to fulfill mandates and respond to the evolving needs of international politics. However, their ineffectiveness is often linked to structural design, the proliferation of bilateral and regional agreements that undermine multilateral frameworks, and inadequate resource management. Mismanagement, corruption, limited policy implementation, and the



absence of mechanisms to hold powerful member states accountable further exacerbate these challenges, undermining the capacity of international organizations to achieve their objectives (Peter 2006, 37–39).

From a functionalist perspective, the ineffectiveness of the AU in Somalia and Sudan is attributable to structural deficiencies, inadequate resources, absence of collective interest, and a lack of robust mechanisms for compliance and accountability. The AU's structural framework, despite its ambitious normative commitments like the principle of non-indifference, exhibits a lack of coherence and institutional capacity essential for effective implementation. The African Union has faced challenges in coordinating the actions of its member states and sustaining a unified approach to conflict resolution in both Somalia and Sudan. Furthermore, the AU's operations have been undermined by resource deficiencies, including inadequate funding, logistical support, and lack of personnel. Such limitations often lead to delayed responses and hinder the capacity for sustained long-term interventions. The challenges impede the AU's capacity to execute its mandates and tackle the complex crises in these areas. Functionalism emphasizes the necessity of reforms to bolster institutional capacity, improve resource management, and guarantee accountability to enhance the effectiveness of the AU in future interventions.

Cases Studies

This study examines Somalia and Sudan because of their representative characteristics and the notable similarities in demonstrating the AU's humanitarian operations in complex crises. The AU's prolonged involvement in both countries yielded certain achievements, like as the recapture of areas from terrorist groups and support for democratic transitions. Nevertheless, AU deployments in both countries have recently stalled, resulting in a resurgence of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and a renewed conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan. Consequently, analyzing these situations is crucial for comprehending the limitations and challenges of AU's humanitarian intervention.

Somalia

For the past three decades, Somalia has been embroiled in a brutal conflict following the collapse of its government. The endemic terrorism in Somalia has exacerbated the ongoing security situation, with the government, military, and other security personnel as primary targets. Al-Shabaab has persistently executed bombings and assassinations, leading to thousands of civilian fatalities (Makinda 1993, 49). Rural communal conflicts frequently intensify humanitarian crises in the nation. The insurgency's menace and the humanitarian needs of vulnerable communities prompted involvement by the UN and the international community.

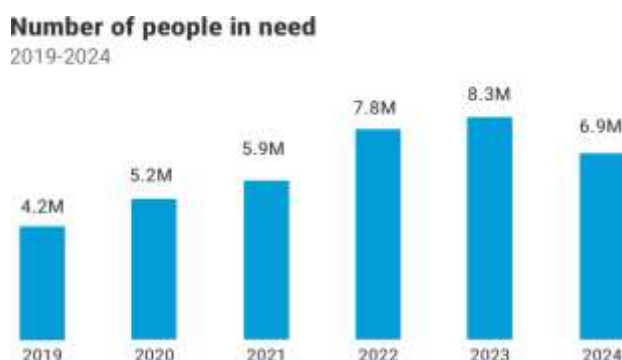
In April 1992, the United Nations launched the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNSOM I) to monitor a cease-fire and assist in the delivery of humanitarian aid. However, due to the difficulties encountered by UNSOM I, the UN authorized a US-led mission initiative known as the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in December 1992 to assure the supply of relief. UNITAF's mission titled "Operation Restore Hope," initially stabilized areas intended for aid distribution, but clashes with militias, particularly those led by warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid, heightened tension. In 1993, UNSOM I grew into UNSOM II, which had an extended mandate that included disarmament, institutional restoration, and the

establishment of law and order (Makinda 1993, 45). However, battles with Aidid's forces hampered progress. In response to the threat posed by Al-Shabaab, the African Union established the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2007 with the support of the UN. AMISOM was tasked with protecting the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), conducting military operations against anti-government groups, mainly al-Shabaab, and facilitating humanitarian assistance and civil-military operations. AMISOM effectively protected the TFG in Mogadishu and played a crucial role in the selection of a new federal government under the leadership of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Furthermore, it obtained key positions within the city, such as the presidential palace at Villa Somalia and air and seaports, from the armed opposition (William 2013, 226). The transition towards a strategic exit resulted in the evolution of AMISOM into the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), aimed at supporting the gradual takeover of security responsibilities by the Somali government. ATMIS focuses on enhancing the training and capacity of the Somali National Army, aiming to empower Somali forces to attain full control by December 2024. (Blyth 2019, 8).

Although AMISOM's presence contributed to the stabilization of specific regions within Somalia, it faced challenges in fostering a self-sustaining security environment, as shown by the persistent presence of al-Shabaab and the recurrence of conflicts. This emphasized the limitations of a military-focused response to a complex humanitarian crisis, underscoring the need for a more holistic approach. The humanitarian needs in Somalia have persistently escalated due to ongoing conflict, insecurity, drought, floods, and disease outbreaks. The renewed intensification of military operations against Al-Shabaab has persistently exerted detrimental effects on the civilian population. In 2023, reports indicated that more than 3.9 million individuals were internally displaced within Somalia (UNHCR 2023, 9). Also, the impacts of floods, drought, conflict, and epidemic outbreaks have exacerbated the susceptibility of the Somali populace. Ultimately, over

3.8 million individuals have been displaced due to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters (Humanitarian Program Cycle 2024, 4)

Figure 1: Number of people in need of Humanitarian Assistance in Somalia



Sources *Humanitarian Programme cycle 2024, 9*

The data indicate a continuous rise in the number of individuals requiring humanitarian assistance in Somalia. The 17 percent decrease in 2023 is primarily attributed to a minor



reduction in food insecurity and malnutrition levels, which remains insignificant in relation to the overall population in need (Humanitarian Programme cycle 2024). Despite the extensive efforts of AMISOM and the presence of ATMIS, the facilitation and sustainability of relief operations were not achieved. This reflects that the AU lacks the structural capacity to independently provide large-scale humanitarian aid, and its presence has occasionally been inadequate in significant areas. The missions authorized to tackle Somalia's conflict and humanitarian crisis have not fully succeeded in fulfilling their mandate due to a failure to confront the underlying causes of the conflict (Dessa, 2016).

Inability of AMISOM to effectively combat the terrorist group al-Shabaab and establish sustainable peace in Somalia is linked to many factors. Firstly, AMISOM operates as a partnership driven mission involving multiple international organizations and bilateral actors, making coherence within and across these relationships critical to its effectiveness. However, the mission has faced significant challenges in establishing unified command and control across its sectors, which are managed by national contingent commanders. This fragmentation has hindered AMISOM's ability to conduct coordinated cross-sector operations, such as Operation Jubba Corridor (William, 2018). The lack of unified command and control between AMISOM's force headquarters and troop-contributing countries (TCCs) at the operational level has exacerbated these challenges. It has also contributed to lower reimbursement allowances for AMISOM personnel compared to their counterparts in UN peacekeeping missions and the failure to deploy the aviation component of twelve military helicopters authorized by the UN Security Council in 2012. Furthermore, military operations in Somalia remain marked by fragmentation rather than a unified effort. Secondly, the inability of AU and Somalia's federal and regional authorities to reconcile and develop a unified strategy that effectively prioritizes either al-Shabaab defeat or political dialogue aimed at securing a long-term peace to the conflict. This challenge underscores the reality that lasting peace cannot be attained solely through military operations or a hardline approach to conflict management.

Thirdly, AU relies on external funding to sustain its operations. Most substantial financial and logistical supports for AMISOM are from the United Nations, the European Union and key bilateral partners, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom. However, these partnerships have failed to address critical gaps in AMISOM's deployed capabilities, particularly the lack of key enabling units such as aviation, engineering, and logistical support teams. Since January 2016, the mission has faced additional financial constraints, with a 20% reduction in personnel allowances from the authorized rate, further straining its operational capacity. These financial challenges have also hindered the mission's ability to achieve one of its core objectives of establishing Somali's security forces capable of taking over primary responsibility for national security. Without the necessary resources and sustained support, AMISOM's efforts to stabilize Somalia remain hampered, leaving critical security and governance gaps unaddressed (Williams 2018, 109). In 2024, the humanitarian needs and response Plan (HNRP) was created as a strategic framework to guarantee a practical and rigorous humanitarian response to regions facing severe and catastrophic security challenges. The implementation of this plan necessitates an investment of \$1.6 billion to address the needs of 5.2 million individuals. Regrettably, the plan has not proven to be very effective due to financial limitations (OCHA, 2003).

Furthermore, Somalia's protracted crisis of governance has created fertile ground for the rise



of al-Shabaab and other groups opposing the government, complicating the operational environment for peace missions. The fragility of the Somalia's state is rooted in decades of political instability, weak institutions, and contested authority between federal and regional actors. These dynamics not only fuel ongoing armed conflicts but also undermine efforts to establish effective governance structures as well as create a highly volatile environment for peace operations. Conducting operations in a context marked by fragmented political authority, competing power centers, and recurrent violence is an immense challenge. Thus, AMISOM has faced significant obstacles in achieving its mandate due to the fractured political landscape and the inability to fully reconcile federal and regional interests (Williams 2018, 105). Consequently, considering the resurgence of Al-Shabaab and the re-escalation of conflict, it is essential to critically examine the decision made by the AU to withdraw ATMIS by December 2024.

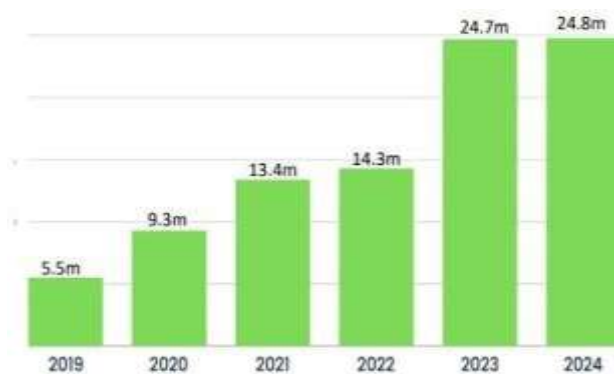
Sudan

The Darfur conflict of 2003 resulted in extensive atrocities, such as mass displacement, human rights violations, and numerous fatalities, highlighting an immediate necessity for both international and regional intervention (Cohen 2006,1). In response to the crisis, the AU initiated the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in 2004. Nonetheless, the mission's failed to adequately address the humanitarian crisis in the region resulted in the initiation of AMIS II in October 2005. This new mandate aimed to oversee and ensure adherence to the ceasefire, safeguard humanitarian relief efforts, and assist in the repatriation of internally displaced persons. (Murithi 2012, 93). In recognition of AMIS's constraints, the AU and United Nations joined forces in 2007 to establish a hybrid mission, referred to as the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). UNAMID integrated resources and personnel from both the AU and UN, with the objective of overcoming the limitations of AMIS through a more robust mandate and enhanced support. In 2021, UNITAMS was created to assist Sudan's fragile political transition after the removal of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019 and the ensuing peace agreements. The mandate emphasized the importance of facilitating peace processes, safeguarding human rights, and promoting governance led by civilians" (United Nations, 2021). Nonetheless, the UN Security Council has resolved to conclude UNITAMS' mandate, with operations gradually ceasing over a three-month timeframe culminating on February 29, 2024 (United Nation, 2023). AMIS and UNAMID have certainly achieved a level of success in overseeing ceasefire violations, offering crucial oversight in Darfur and aiding Sudan's democratic transition. Nonetheless, the mission falls short of fully achieving its goal of protecting human rights in Sudan and ensuring a suitable peace (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Recently, Sudan was thrown into another severe conflict in mid-April 2023, when severe fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began in the capital Khartoum but quickly spread to other parts of the country. The current outbreak of violence and insecurity has killed around 12000 people and displaced 6.1 million (OCHA 2023, 5). This has contributed to a rise in the number of citizens in need of humanitarian aid. According to the 2024 humanitarian program, the number of people in humanitarian needs in the state has increased from 5.8 million to 24.8 million over the last eight years. Similarly, UN refugees noted that the escalating conflicts have caused extensive damage to critical infrastructure and facilities such as water and healthcare, the collapse of banking and financial services, frequent interruptions in electricity supply and telecommunications

services, and widespread looting (Humanitarian programme cycle, 2023). In addition to violent conflict, climatic variability and change have increased the frequency of droughts and rainfall variability in recent decades. Despite the extent of atrocity, death, displacement, and violation of human rights, there is no significant action taken by the AU in addressing the recent menace in Sudan.

Figure 2: The Number of People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance in Sudan.



Sources: (OCHA 2023, 7)

This data shows the consistent increase in Humanitarian needs in Sudan. The renewed violence underscores the critical need for comprehensive strategies that address both immediate security concerns and the deep-rooted issues fueling the conflict. It also highlights the importance of sustained international engagement and support to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

However, the AU mission in Sudan faced numerous challenges that significantly hindered its effectiveness. UNAMID grappled with significant operational limitations, including insufficient equipment and training for its contingents, as well as critical shortages in essential resources such as helicopters and transport vehicles. These deficiencies severely restricted the mission's mobility and capacity to protect civilians effectively. While substantial financial support was provided by entities such as Canada, the European Union, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the mission remained underfunded, limiting its capacity to address the complexities of the Sudan conflict effectively (Dung, Umar & Adamu 2024, 7). Relatedly, on the 27th of May 2023, the PSC adopted the AU Roadmap aimed at establishing a mechanism to coordinate and secure immediate, permanent, and unconditional cessation of hostilities as well as strengthen the humanitarian response (AU, 2023). Additionally, the Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Responsive Plan was established to respond to the critical needs of the most vulnerable, particularly the displaced, hosting communities, conflict-affected people, and refugees. The plan estimated US\$2.7 billion to be used to provide aid to 15 million Sudanese. However, only US\$323 million has been contributed, with the USA donating 40% of the total thus far (Humanitarian program 2024, 5). This has undermined the operationalization and effectiveness of this plan. Consequently, delays in disbursing pledged funds and the absence of long-term funding commitments exacerbated the mission's operational constraints, creating an overreliance on



ad-hoc contributions from donors (Williams, 2009; Murithi, 2008).

Furthermore, UNAMID operated in one of the most volatile and dangerous environments for peacekeeping missions. Peacekeepers were frequently attacked by armed groups, including militias and non-state actors engaged in the Darfur crisis. These attacks not only resulted in casualties and injuries among UNAMID personnel but also significantly impeded the mission's ability to carry out its mandate. Persistent insecurity restricted peacekeepers' freedom of movement, making it difficult to enable humanitarian relief delivery, monitor ceasefires, and safeguard populations at risk (Relief, 2021). The hostile environment also strained the mission's resources and morale; in several instances, peacekeeping convoys were ambushed, and their equipment was looted, further diminishing operational effectiveness. Additionally, threats against UNAMID bases and personnel reduced their capacity to engage with local communities and deter violence. The inability to provide consistent security and humanitarian access contributed to the continued suffering of civilians, undermining the mission's overall impact. The mission also struggled to tackle the underlying causes of the conflict, such as ethnic tensions and competition over resources. This shortcoming limited its ability to foster long-term peace and stability in the region (IPI 2019, 2).

Lastly, UNAMID's operations were consistently hindered by the Sudanese government, which enforced restrictions on movement and delayed the approval of troop deployments. These significantly undermined the mission's operational effectiveness and its ability to engage with local communities, thereby limiting its capacity to fulfill its mandate (Stimson Center, 2020). Additionally, varying political interests and priorities among AU member states complicated efforts to resolve the Darfur conflict. Some member states aligned with the Sudanese government,

while others supported rebel factions, resulting in a fragmented and inconsistent approach to conflict resolution (Agaba 2022, 10). The internal divisions undermined the AU's credibility and transparency as a political mediator, which were apparent within the AU mediation team, thereby decreasing the organization's capacity to promote a unified and impartial resolution to the crisis. (Africa Briefing Report, 2011). These challenges have undermined the mission's ability to respond rapidly and effectively to the security threats and humanitarian crises.

CONCLUSION

The AU was founded with a profound humanitarian mandate aimed at tackling crises and fostering peace and security across the continent. Despite the robust legal framework, encompassing the Constitutive Act and various policy instruments designed to tackle the underlying causes of conflicts and to harmonize responses, a notable disparity persists between these provisions and their implementation in practice. The analysis of AU interventions in Somalia and Sudan underscores the persistent challenges stemming from structural deficiencies, inadequate resources, fragmented political will, and over-reliance on external donors. These limitations have severely constrained the AU's capacity to provide timely and effective humanitarian responses.

While the AU has made some progress, such as facilitating ceasefires and supporting democratic transitions. It has failed to tackle the underlying causes of conflict and establish



the necessary conditions for enduring peace. The narrow emphasis on ceasefire agreements, devoid of corresponding actions to address the fundamental sources of instability, illustrates the AU's inability to adopt a proactive approach that transcends mere short-term conflict resolution. Consequently, this reactionary posture fosters the reemergence and intensification of conflict, perpetuating cycles of violence and rendering the region susceptible to enduring instability. The incessant crisis, which has exacerbated humanitarian demands, has unequivocally illustrated that the AU lacks the capability to adequately address the challenges confronting the continent. This has consistently rendered the concept of an African solution to an African problem unrealistic. We argued that the African Union's inability to evolve from temporary ceasefires to more proactive measures has undermined its efficacy in conflict resolution, thereby perpetuating a region riddled with conflict.

To enhance its effectiveness, this study recommends comprehensive institutional reforms that include strengthening structural and operational coherence, improving resource management, and fostering greater political and financial independence from external actors. Additionally, investment and prioritizing conflict prevention and early warning systems are crucial because it is less costly to prevent conflict than to resolve it, and an optimal humanitarian response can only be achieved by addressing the major drivers of the conflict.

Lastly, AU member states must demonstrate a stronger commitment and political cohesion by aligning national interests with the broader goals of the AU, facilitating collective decision-making, and avoiding actions that undermine regional solidarity.

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